

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 23-24 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite; and rejected claims 11, 12, and 16-30 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,004,405 of Oishi et al. in view of Japanese patent publication Nos. 2001-351835 and 2001-118757. The Examiner also allowed claims 1-10 and objected to claims 13-15 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 1-10 and indicating that claim 13 contains allowable subject matter.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections under Sections 112 and 103(a). However, to advance prosecution, Applicants have rewritten claim 13 in independent form to include the limitations of independent claim 11 from which it directly depended, and have also cancelled claims 11, 12, and 16-36 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. The rejections under Sections 112 and 103(a) are rendered moot by the cancellation of claims. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 11, 12, and 16-30 at a later time in another application, such as a continuing application, or in the present application.¹ Only claims 1-10 and 13-15 remain pending and are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of pending claims 1-10 and 13-15.

¹ Claims 31-36 are currently pending in divisional application no. 11/077,039.

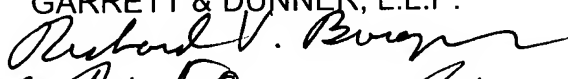

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By:


 #27,432
Richard V. Burgujian
Reg. No. 31,744